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The Examiner rejected the claims of this case under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by De Rosa et al., (US Patent No. 6055544). DeRosa teaches providing a content index and an element index for a single document or a group of connected documents, such as a series of volumes by the same author or publisher. The indexes provided by DeRosa are based upon elements of the document, the elements being defined by tags of a general markup language which are present in the document. If the structure of the underlying document changes so does the content index and the element index. If a document does not contain markup tags the indexes of DeRosa cannot be implemented. The content index is simply a content of the document based upon sections and subsections of the document as defined by the markup tags. The element index is an index which indicates the number of occurrences of a particular word in a particular element. The indexes of Derosa are compiled automatically from the document without the need for human intervention. Additionally, the algorithms performed to produce either the content or the element index are not based on searching the content of the document using a plurality of words or logical operators.

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The invention of the Applicant is a system and method for organizing and retrieving content of documents according to paragraph groups (textual fragments), the paragraph groups having one or more paragraphs. The invention is outlined below.

An expert in a field of knowledge designs a concept index. A concept index is typically a hierarchical index of knowledge for a particular field of knowledge. For example, a concept index for "computers" may have at its root level the concept of "computers". Below the root level there may be two sub-nodes each being a sub-concept of "computers", for example, "hardware" and "software". Below the "software" node there may be two more sub-nodes each being a sub-concept of "software", for example "systems software" and "application software" and so on. Therefore, the concept index defines the main topics and sub topics of a particular field of knowledge at various levels, from broad topics to very specific topics.

In addition, the expert determines based upon his expert opinion including the use of words in the field of knowledge which words and logical operators (called comparison criteria in the attached claim) can best be used to locate particular concepts in the paragraph groups.

Once the concept index has been defined, the paragraph groups are classified by performing a comparison step and a linking step. Each paragraph group, for all of the documents, is compared to each concept in the concept index to determine which paragraph groups match which concepts. Paragraph groups, with a match, are then linked to the relevant nodes of the concept index.

After the linking step, the system is now ready for a user to operate. A user navigates up and down the content index to find a topic (concept) of interest. Once the topic of interest is found, the relevant paragraph groups are then retrieved for viewing by the user.

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The following points, in particular, should be noted by the Examiner.

1. Assigning concepts to nodes, defining the relationship of one node to another and assigning words and logical operators (comparison criteria) to nodes are all performed independently of any one document or paragraph group, in comparison to DeRosa where the content index and element index are dependent upon their underlying documents. For example, if a new document is added to the database of documents, the concept index does not need to be updated. The comparison step is simply performed on the new document to see how the paragraph groups of the new document, if any, will be linked to the nodes of the concept index. Therefore, the concept index is formed independently of any one document.

2. Comparison criteria are not simple one word searches (as in DeRosa). Comparison criteria of the present invention include a plurality of words and at least one logical operator.